Read Dec. 1
C. H. M.

Philadelphia 11 mo 4 - 1854

Beloved Friend

C. H. Malcom

A letter over thy signature, addressed to me, has within a few days come to hand, from the tenor of which I infer that my qualification to impart information in regard to religious establishments, has been somewhat overestimated by those who advised the inquiry. Gladly indeed would I furnish thee, or the society for whom thou art acting, with any information within the range of my knowledge, which can in any way advance the cause of vital christianity, or increase the love of christians for each other. But I fear that I shall not be able to furnish such answers to the questions proposed as to answer the design of the proposers. I shall transcribe the questions, and annex such answers as I am qualified to make -

1. Has your denomination any theological institution in this country or in Europe.

Answer. Attaching to the term Theological Seminary (or institution), the meaning which I suppose your society assigns to it, I must answer in the negative. If theological seminaries are designed to prepare, instruct or qualify young men to officiate as ministers of the gospel, it is not possible, that

with our views of the nature and qualifications of the gospel ministry and ministers, such seminaries should be established or maintained among us. It is a part of our doctrine that the call and qualification of the true ministers of the gospel, must be from above—from the Father of light who dispenses his gifts according to the counsel of his own will; and as we do not expect parents or others to know in advance, what young persons may be called to the ministry, of course they would be unable to decide what course they ought to place in such seminaries if we had them. We however do not regard the qualification for the ministry to be such as schools or colleges can confer. We however freely admit that much which can be learned at school may be useful, as auxiliaries, to those who are divinely called and qualified to preach the gospel. We also appreciate the value and importance of a religious and liberal education; hence we endeavor, as far as practicable, to render our schools, actually theological seminaries, in which such instruction may be given, and such habits and principles inculcated, as may prepare the rising generation to occupy their proper stations in civil & religious society, whether engaged to preach the gospel

3 Are the female ~~ministers~~ preachers inducted into the ministry in the same manner as the male? Ans. They are acknowledged in the same way.

4 Does your denomination support any foreign missions; and if so, where; and what are the number of the missionaries?

Ans. We do not employ ministers to preach either to christians or others. But we have establishments for improving the condition of the Indians, and instructing them in agriculture and the arts of civilized life. Some schools have been kept up in different places among them. There is one establishment, on the Allegany, in the State of New York, under the care of the Yearly Meeting of Philadelphia. This is among the Senecas, or perhaps more properly among the remnant of the Six nations.

There is likewise an establishment among the Shawnese on the west of the Mississippi, under the patronage of three yearly meetings, Baltimore, Ohio and Indiana. The expenses of these institutions are defrayed by legacies or voluntary donations, all raised within the society. Considerable sums are expended every year in the promotion of this concern

5 How is each individual church or society governed?

Ans. Our system of church government is nearly peculiar to our society, and is apparently more democratic than those of other christian communities. The monthly meetings, which are usually composed of friends who reside in the same neighborhood, constitute the executive department. At those meetings all our members are at liberty to attend, and express their sentiments. These meetings have the power to admit or disown (expel) members. But their disownments are subject to the revision and reversal of the Quarterly Meeting. Several monthly meetings compose a Quarterly Meeting to which the monthly meetings are subordinate. The Quarterly meeting of Philada is composed of seven monthly meetings. A number of Quarterly meetings compose a Yearly Meeting, to which the constituent Quarterly Meetings are subordinate. Philada Yearly Meeting consists of ten Quarterly meetings. The rules of discipline, to which all the members are expected to submit, are settled by the Yearly Meeting, at which any member may attend and give his voice for or against their adoption.

The Yearly Meetings usually maintain an epistolary correspondence, but they have no jurisdiction over each other. We have no metropolitan church—

It is usual for monthly meetings to appoint a

pel or not. George Fox, the first preacher in our society, advised his friends, nearly two centuries ago, to establish schools, for the instruction of youth "in things civil and useful"; and that object has been kept in view, by our society, from that time to the present. Both in Europe and America, several large Boarding schools are maintained, under the patronage of our Larger meetings, all of which may be designated Theological Seminaries; defining the terms in our mode.

2 — Have you regular clergymen, or ministers? whose sole business it is to preach the gospel; and if so what course of preparation do they go through? How are they inducted into office? Do they receive any salary; and are they pastors or evangelists, as we use those words?

Ans. We have ministers, but the term clergymen is not applied to any class among us. Induction to office, as generally understood, is not applied to our ministers. A friend of either sex who apprehends himself or herself required by a divine impulse to preach the gospel, is at liberty to exercise the gift bestowed; and this beginning is usually in a few words or sentences. Time and opportunity are allowed to such beginners to give proof of their ministry; and if upon experience, the friends of the meeting believe the individual really called to the

ministry, the monthly meeting takes up the subject and makes a record acknowledging the friend as a minister. But if a member thus appearing in the ministry is disapproved, the Elders upon due consideration are expected to give a friendly and private intimation of their judgment. No salaries are paid to any of our ministers; and of course they, like others, are employed, when at home, in business for a support, unless they are possessed of competent estates. Approved ministers when engaged in religious labors at a distance, if not in a condition conveniently to support the expense, are not allowed to be improperly burdened, or their services impeded for want of the means. Their expenses are defrayed by the society. But we construe the command strictly, "Freely ye have received, freely give." Our ministers are expected to attend the meetings to which they belong, but there is no such thing among us as pastors having charge of particular congregations. A meeting may be, and many are, without any minister, or several may be members of one meeting. There were in one of the meetings in this city, within the memory of some now living, no fewer than seven eminent ministers. Yet no special charge of the congregation or meeting was vested in any of them.